

The Yards (Southeast Federal Center) Temporary Parking Lots

Washington, D.C.

July 6, 2007

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 07-17
EXHIBIT NO. 20

Prepared For:
Forest City Washington
1615 L Street, NW Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
202-496-6600

Prepared By:
Gorove/Slade
Associates, Inc.





GOROVE/SLADE ASSOCIATES, INC.
Transportation, Traffic and Parking

PREPARED BY:

Gorove/Slade Associates, Inc.
1140 Connecticut Avenue
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036

Tel: 202.296.8625
Fax: 202.785.1276

ADDITIONAL OFFICES:

3914 Centreville Road
Suite 330
Chantilly, VA 20151

Tel: 703.787.9595
Fax: 703.787.9905

825 Chicago Avenue
Suite D
Chicago, IL 60202

Tel: 847.733.1390
Fax: 847.733.1391

Foster Plaza 5
651 Holiday Drive, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15220

Tel: 412.928.1730 x124
Fax: 412.928.1731

www.goroveslade.com

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents an analysis of the traffic impacts of the proposed installation of four temporary surface parking lots in The Yards (at the Southeast Federal Center). The Yards is just east of the new Washington Nationals Ballpark, adjacent to the new United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) headquarters building and immediately west of the Washington Navy Yard (see Figure 1). These temporary parking lots will be an interim use and will be removed when the Yards ownership is ready to develop the sites of the lots.

The total amount of temporary spaces proposed is 949. These parking spaces are expected to serve four types of users, (1) USDOT employees, (2) Navy Yard employees, (3) construction workers, and (4) Ballpark patrons.

Many studies have already been performed for The Yards/Southeast Federal Center (SEFC) area, including:

- The *SEFC Environmental Impact Study (EIS)* by Parsons Transportation Group for the General Services Administration (GSA);
- The *USDOT Traffic Impact Study (TIS)* by Gorove/Slade for JBG;
- The *SEFC Transportation Master Plan* by Gorove/Slade for Forest City Washington (FCW); and
- The *Ballpark Environmental Mitigation Study (EMS)*, *Transportation Management Plan (TMP)* and *Traffic Operations and Parking Plan (TOPP)* reports by Gorove/Slade for the DC Sports and Entertainment Commission (DCSEC).

Contained in these reports are analyses of existing and future traffic conditions in Near Southeast/Southwest. Most notably, the *SEFC EIS* and *SEFC Transportation Master Plan* contain detailed evaluations of the external and internal roadways networks of the SEFC/The Yards. As concluded in those reports, the roadways surrounding and within The Yards will have the capacity needed to handle anticipated future traffic volumes. The proposed temporary lots will generate less traffic than the total SEFC traffic assumed in these studies, thus it can be assumed the planned traffic infrastructure will operate at acceptable conditions with the inclusion of these four parking lots.

This report presents a description of possible transportation impacts generated by these lots. The following section of the report describes the anticipated use of the parking lots. Also presented is a summary of impacts on a typical weekday and during an event day at the new Ballpark.

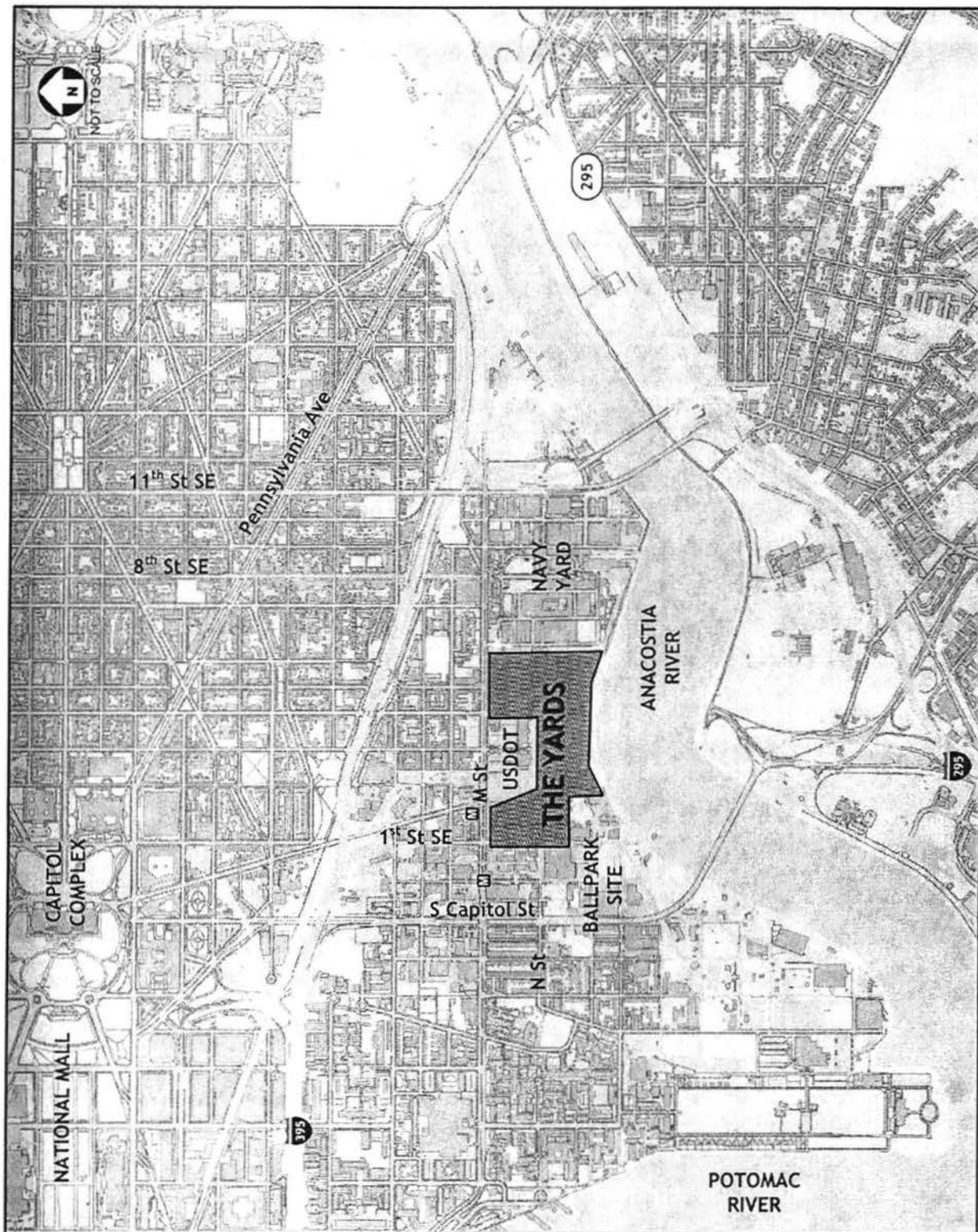


Figure 1: Site Location



TEMPORARY PARKING LOTS DETAILS

The four lots proposed are shown on Figure 2. They are located between the new Washington Nationals Ballpark and the Navy Yard, along N Street SE and Tingey Street, south of M Street SE. These parking lots are located on future development parcels within The Yards. Access points to the parking facilities will be from N Street SE, N Place SE, the future 3rd Street SE, and the future Water Street SE. None of the proposed access points are located adjacent to the USDOT Headquarters.

Anticipated Users

These parking spaces will satisfy existing and near term parking demand generated by a number of different user groups:

- Today, Washington Navy Yard personnel park in various locations outside of the Navy Yard campus, and some of those locations will become unavailable in the near future. These personnel will find the Yards temporary parking lots convenient and they will constitute one of the user groups. Because of the work schedules at the Navy Yard, these parkers arrive and leave prior to the commuter peak period.
- The USDOT Headquarters has recently opened, with approximately 4,000 employees and an ultimate employee population of 5,500 people. The USDOT on-site parking garage has less than 1,000 parking spaces. While USDOT has an aggressive and successful parking and traffic demand management program and anticipates that their on-site parking will be adequate, there will be a transition period during which they will need more parking, and the proposed temporary lots will serve that need.
- This neighborhood is the fastest growing area in the District and as a result of the significant construction in the area, there is a serious shortage of parking to meet the needs of construction workers. The construction worker parking needs in this developing area cannot be met fully on street, and therefore these temporary surface spaces will help to solve this problem. These parkers also arrive and leave prior to the commuter peak period. Forest City Washington plans to accommodate the construction worker parking problem by opening these lots for use by 6 a.m. on weekdays.

In addition, these proposed parking facilities have been anticipated in the District of Columbia planning for the Ballpark. The *Ballpark Traffic Operations and Parking Plan (TOPP)* states that the Ballpark is "... a modern urban spectator facility with characteristics similar to a number of U.S. ballparks that are located with excellent transit access in walkable neighborhoods in proximity to downtown areas and dense residential neighborhoods. The TOPP is founded on a number of transportation goals that are consistent with these characteristics", which include:

- "Ballpark parking will be dispersed so traffic will not be concentrated and cause congestion";



and

- “Minimize impacts on residents... by segregating Ballpark traffic and parking from resident and commuter traffic and parking as much as possible.”

The TOPP addressed the use of these parking spaces on game days as part of the determination of strategies and tactics to ensure that all of the Ballpark planning goals, objectives and principles could be achieved. In particular, the routing of traffic to and from these parking facilities was developed to avoid residential neighborhoods, and the TOPP includes measures to encourage fans that drive to take routes that will minimize their impacts. These routes and measures are detailed in a later section of this report.

Because the three commuter groups described above are all weekday daytime users of these parking lots, their use is compatible with weekday evening and weekend baseball fan parking needs. This works especially well for the Navy Yard and construction worker categories that both leave the area early on weekdays so those spaces will readily be available for Ballpark fan use for a typical 7:05 p.m. game start time.

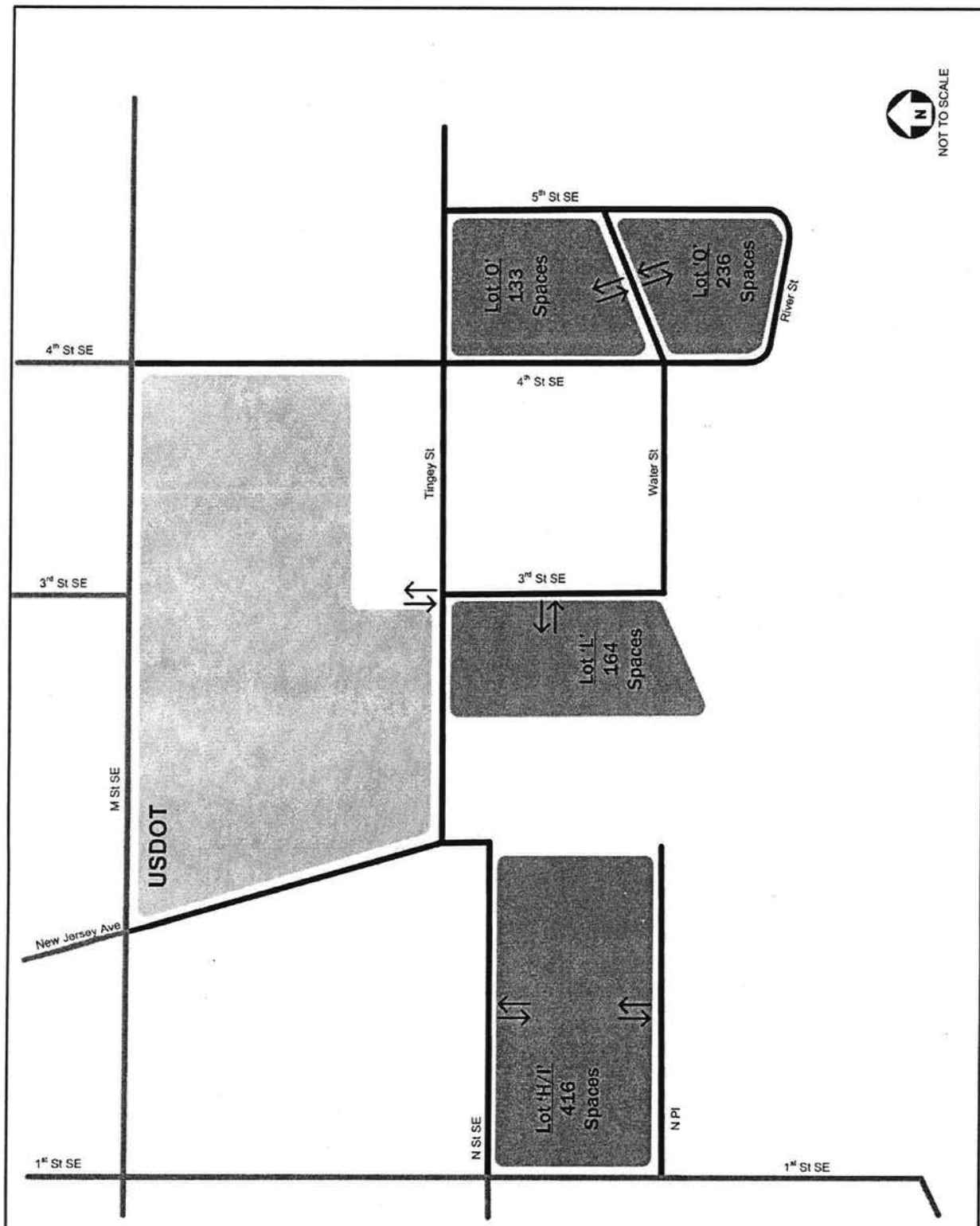


Figure 2: Location of Proposed Lots

SUMMARY OF IMPACT: TYPICAL WEEKDAY

During typical weekdays, the temporary parking lots will have an impact on area traffic as some traffic generated by these lots will arrive and depart during the morning and evening rush hours.

Two factors will keep this impact to a minimum:

- 1) It is likely that these lots will not generate new traffic on non-game days, but will solve existing parking capacity shortfalls: construction workers (this is a growing concern and Clark Construction alone has 650 workers in the area each day on a number of projects), Navy personnel who have had to park off of the Washington Navy Yard campus in other locations but are beginning to lose those locations, and USDOT personnel who will eventually be fully accommodated on their site but on an interim basis need spillover parking.
- 2) The arrival and departure times of construction workers and Navy Yard employees occurs before the District morning and evening rush hours.

For these lots to generate their highest possible impact, they would need to be in high demand from office workers that travel within the traditional District rush hours. Table 1 presents a trip generation calculation for the proposed parking lots given those conditions. Also presented is the trip generation for the ultimate building of The Yards, as presented in the *SEFC Transportation Master Plan*.

Table 1: Trip Generation Comparison

Scenario	No. of Parking Spaces	Vehicle Trips Generated			
		AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
		In	Out	In	Out
Trip Rate per Parking Space, Office Use under High Demand*	1	0.55	0.10	0.125	0.55
'Worst-Case' Trips Generated by Temporary Lots	949	522	95	119	522
Ultimate Built-Out of The Yards**	Approx. 4,225	1,176	671	830	1,376

*Rates derived from *Parking, Weant and Levinson, 1990*

***SEFC Transportation Master Plan, Gorove/Slade Associates, Inc.*

The trip generation comparison presented in Table 1 shows that even through these parking lots could generate approximately 600 vehicle trips during the rush hour, the amount of trips is still less than the ultimate build-out of The Yards. Thus, it can be assumed that the conclusions from prior reports are still valid; the planned roadway infrastructure will be able to accommodate the newly generated traffic.

The expected directions of approach these trips would take to The Yards is shown on Figure 3. The routing of trips to and from the parking lots is presented on Figures 4 and 5. The routing diagrams show that the movements generated by the lots will not interfere with traffic generated by the USDOT. All of the proposed curb cuts are mid-block, away from intersections and other curb cuts.



These commuter groups anticipated to use the proposed parking lots will route themselves to and from these parking facilities to minimize their exposure to congestion so as to reduce their commute travel time and stress. As part of this study, the possible routes to parking from the major commuter facilities that serve this area were reviewed. It was determined that residential neighborhoods are safe from traffic encroachment by these commuters because all logical access routes that are most direct and that avoid well known congested areas do not utilize residential neighborhood streets. In addition, the parking lots are also well buffered (visually) from existing residential neighborhoods to the west by the Ballpark and the north by the USDOT building.

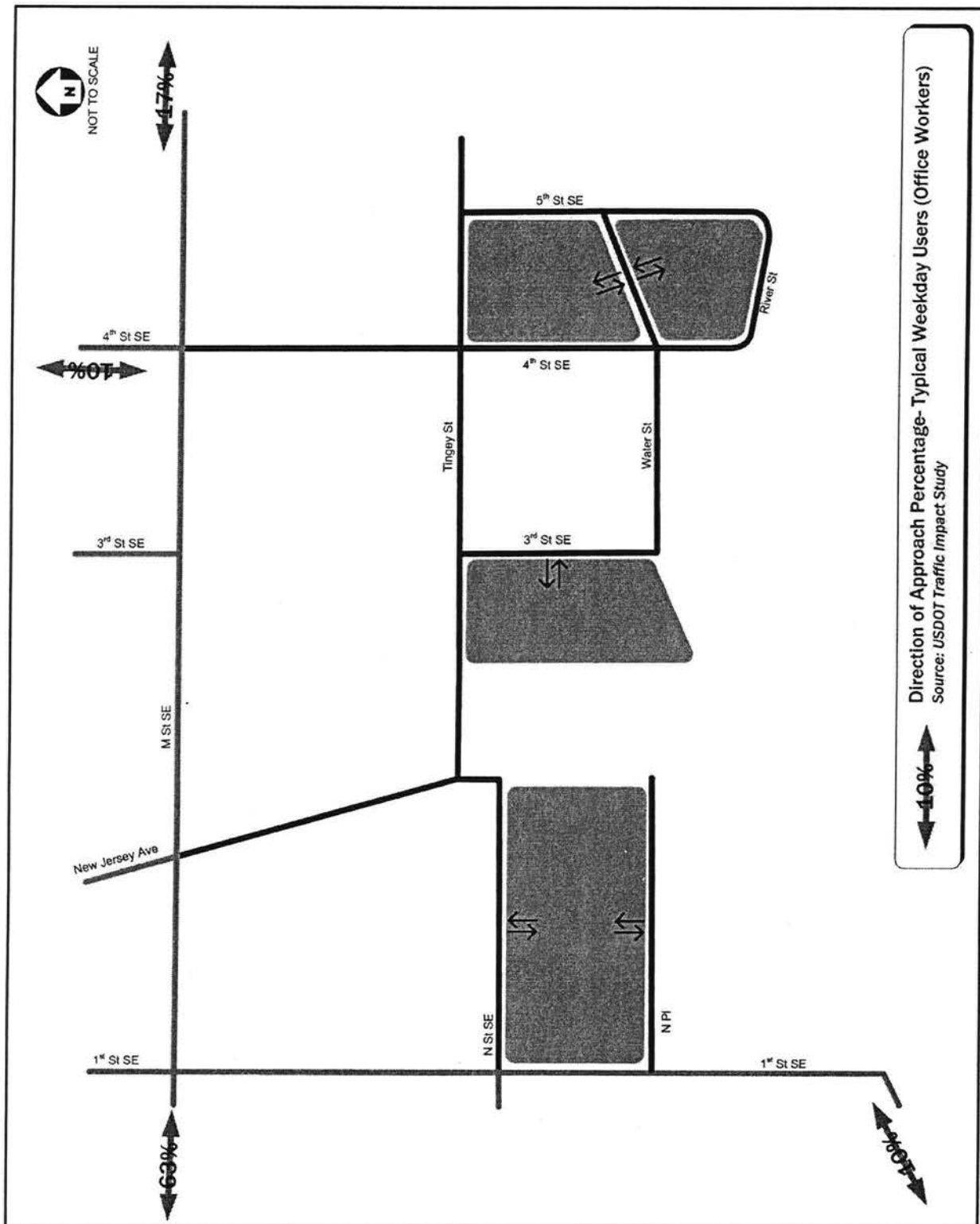


Figure 3: Typical Weekday Rush Hour Directions of Approach

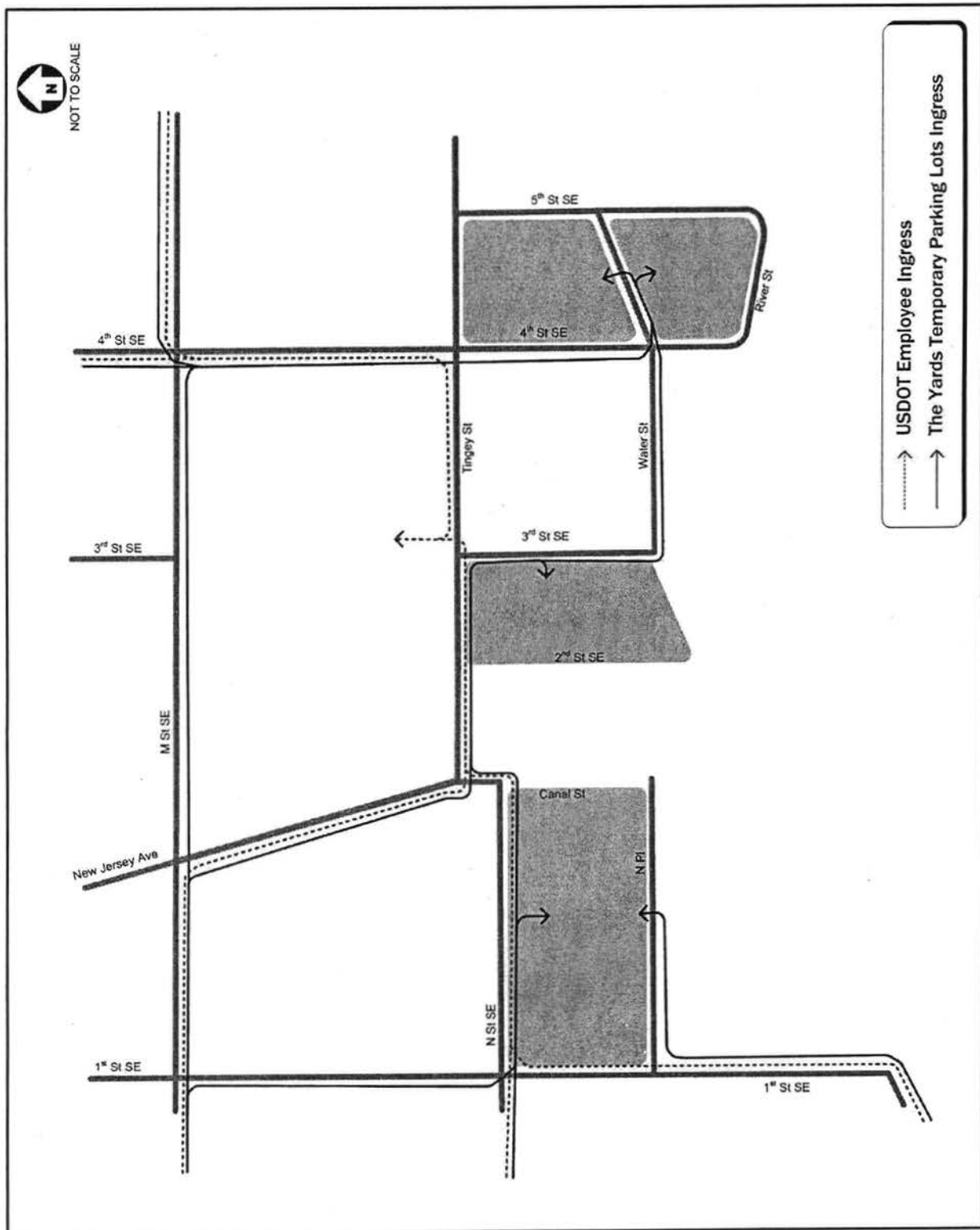


Figure 4: Typical Weekday Routing, Ingress

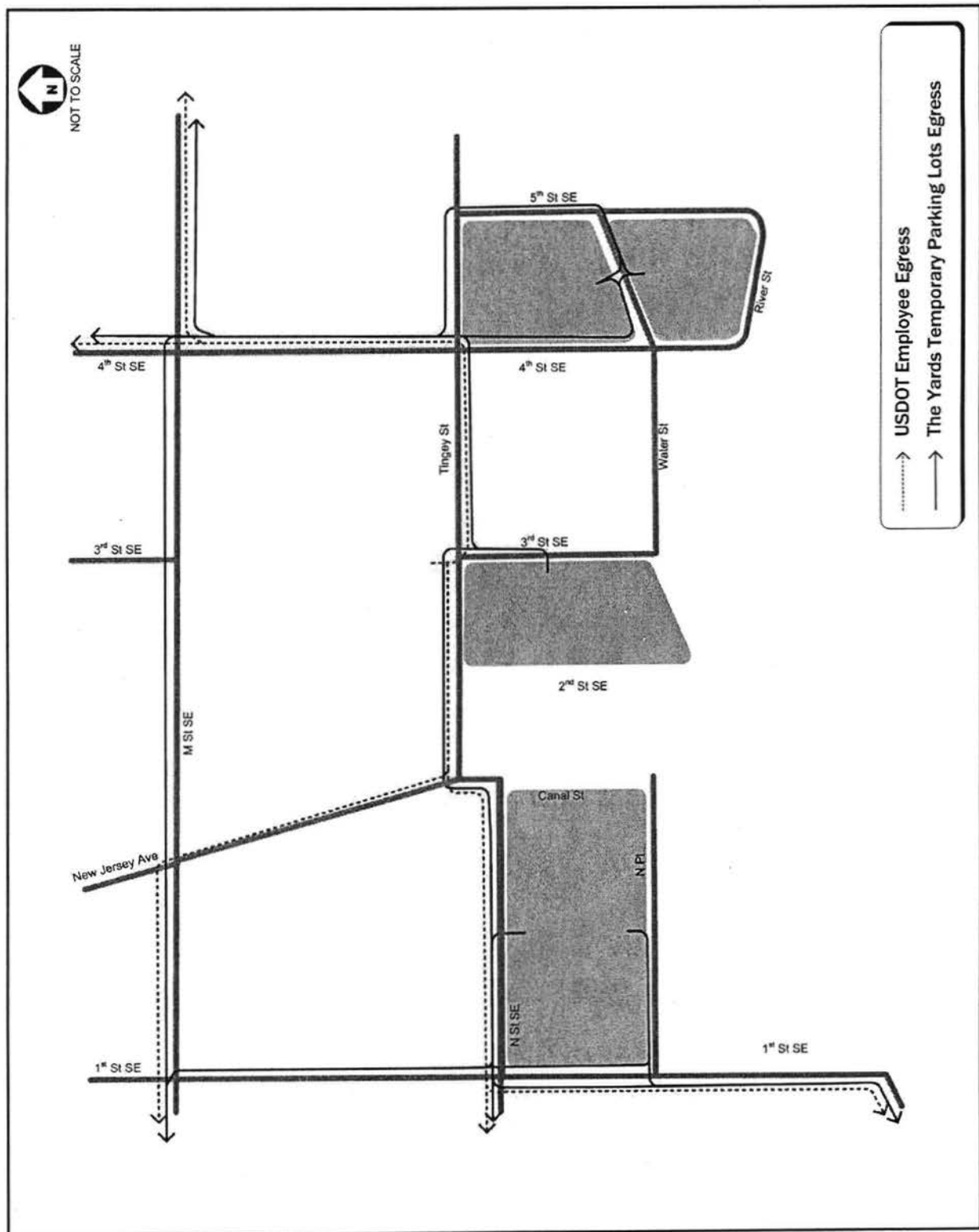


Figure 5: Typical Weekday Routing, Egress



SUMMARY OF IMPACT: EVENT DAY

As stated above, the types of anticipated users of the parking lots is a good match for their use as event day parking at the new Washington Nationals Ballpark. The use of these proposed facilities was incorporated into the planning effort for the new Ballpark.

The transportation planning effort for the new Ballpark is summarized in the *Ballpark Traffic Operations and Parking Plan (TOPP)*. The TOPP is scheduled to be issued to the public in draft form in July 2007. The DC Sports and Entertainment Commission provided an early draft, to allow for discussion of event day impacts of the proposed parking lots.

There are two major impacts that could be generated by the use of these lots on event days:

- *Ballpark generated traffic could travel through local neighborhoods*
One of the goals of the Ballpark planning effort was to keep the amount of patrons traveling through local communities to a minimum. To accomplish this, all routes to and from parking facilities were examined. Preferred routes were chosen, and the information disseminated to patrons driving to the game and signs directing motorists will be tailored to these routes.

Similar to an airport, drivers to the new Ballpark will be directed to colored parking 'zones', sub-sets of parking facilities in close proximity to each other. The TOPP contains a draft of these zones; the proposed temporary parking lots at The Yards are within the green 'zone'. Figures 6 and 7 show the preferred ingress and egress routing of the green 'zone'. The ingress and egress routes do not use any neighborhood streets in near Southwest, including Eye Street SW, P Street SW, and 4th Street SW.
- *Ballpark generated traffic could generate congestion and long delays*
Because the Ballpark is located in an urban area, there will be congestion on surrounding streets before and after games. Although the TOPP presents measures to reduce demand, including encouraging high use of Metrorail, many people will still drive to and from the Ballpark. The draft TOPP received from the DCSEC contained summaries of mitigation measures to reduce roadway congestion levels before and after events. These special operations measures, summarized on Figures 8 and 9 include altering signal timings, restricting turning movements, allowing double-left and right turns at specific congestion points and the placement of police and intersection control officers at key intersections. Although these measures are still in draft form, they indicate the type of operations planned to minimize the impact of Ballpark patrons driving to and from the game will have on the surrounding roadways.

In addition, the TOPP includes communications strategies to inform neighbors such as USDOT of the game schedules and encourage USDOT commuters to avoid baseball traffic by leaving early, using transit, or telecommuting; actions that would cause their parking demand to be reduced when Ballpark fans are seeking to use these parking spaces.

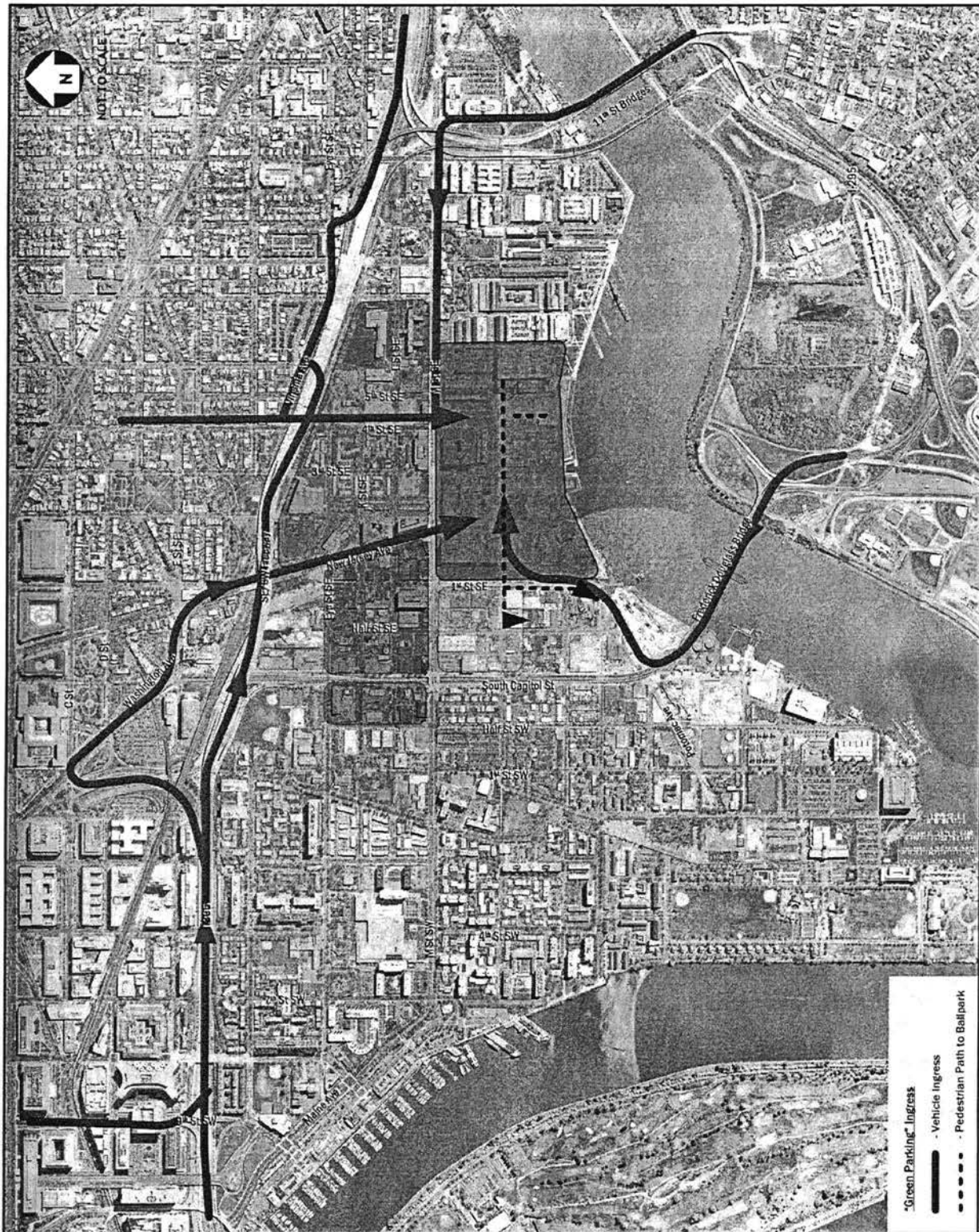


Figure 6: Green Parking 'Zone' Routing, Ingress

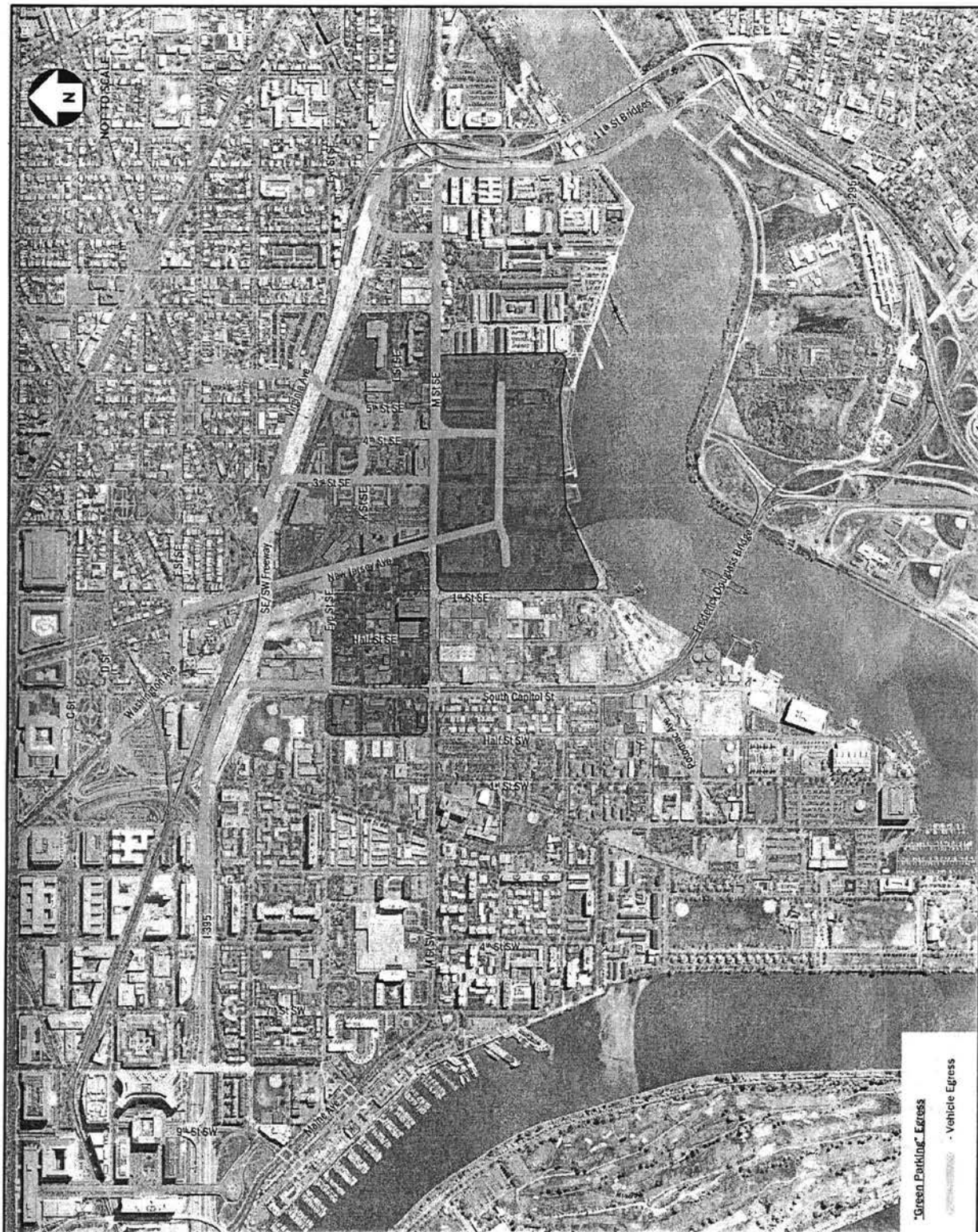


Figure 7: Green Parking 'Zone' Routing, Egress

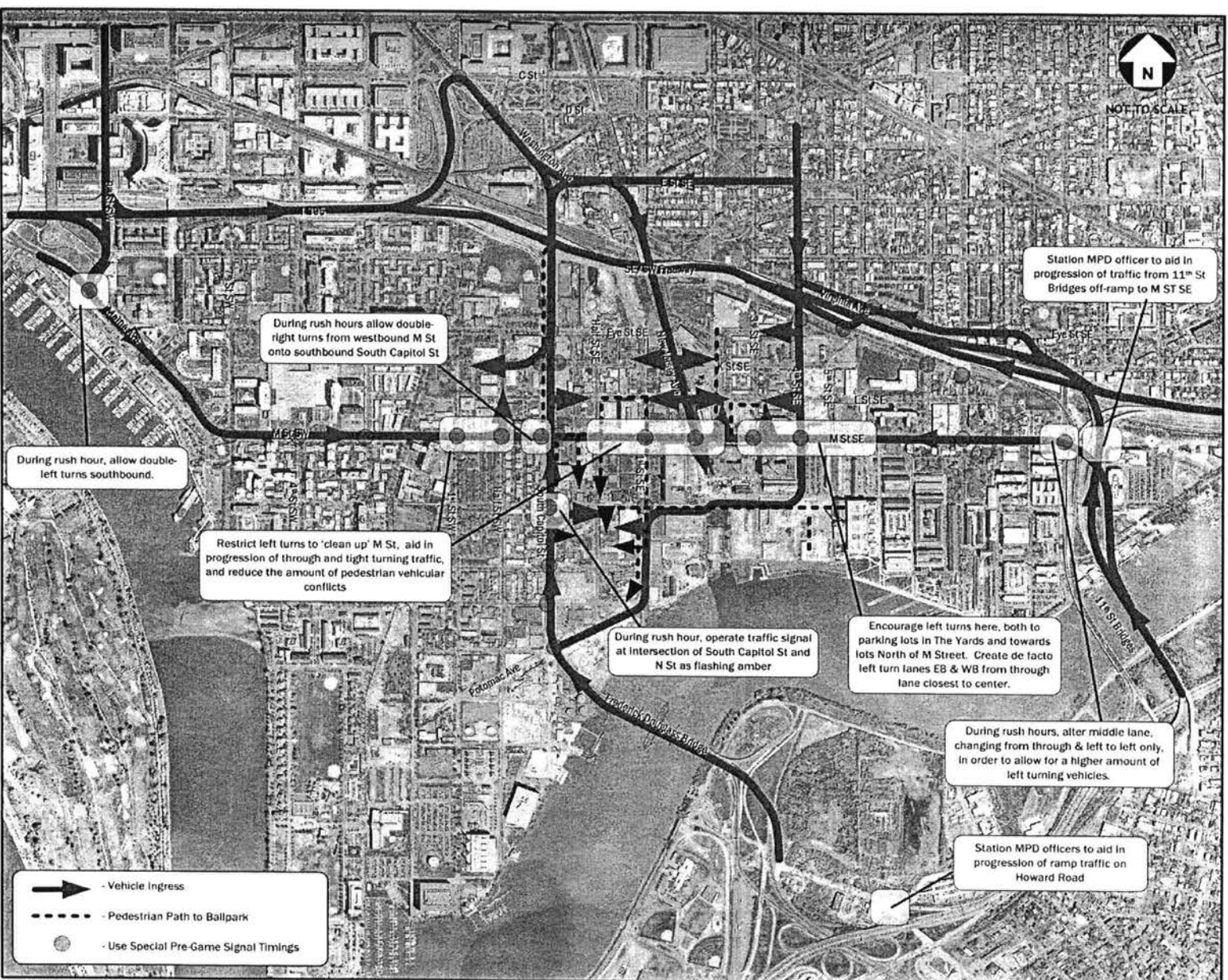


Figure 8: Draft Pre-Game Summary of Special Operations Measures

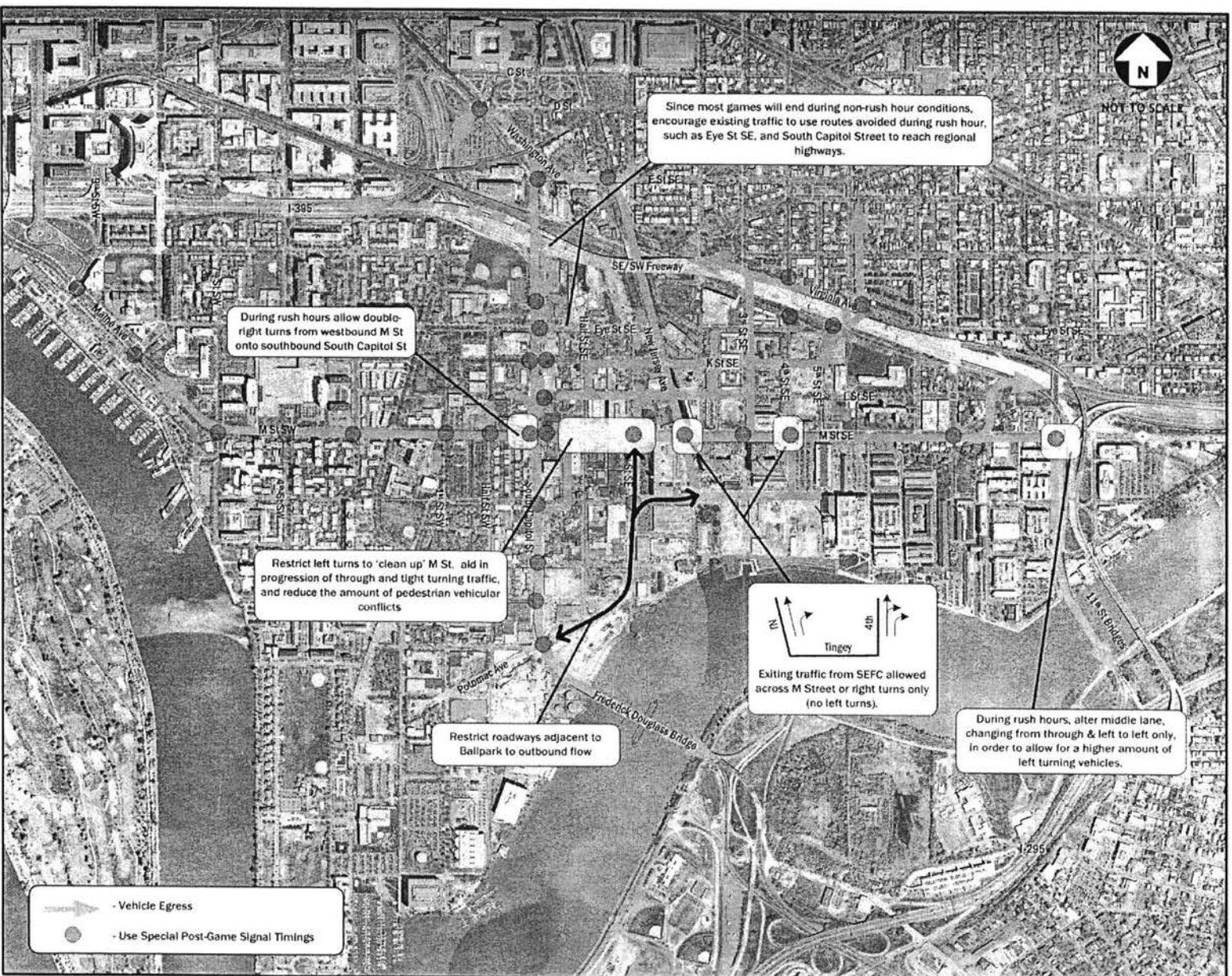


Figure 9: Draft Post-Game Summary of Special Operations Measures



CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analyses summarized in this report, it can be concluded that:

- The construction of the proposed parking lots will fulfill a standing and expected need from construction workers, Navy Yard employees and USDOT employees;
- The planned roadways infrastructure will be adequate to handle the anticipated traffic volumes generated by the proposed lots;
- The lots will fill an important role in the traffic operations of the new Washington Nationals Ballpark;
- Vehicles traveling to and from the proposed parking lots will not travel on neighborhood streets, either on typical weekdays or on event days; and
- The impact during events at the Ballpark will be mitigated using special operations measures detailed in the *Ballpark Traffic Operations and Parking Plan (TOPP)*.